

FEDERAL BENEFITS

FOR VETERANS

FACT SHEET

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FAMILY AND SURVIVOR BENEFITS

Some family members of disabled or deceased veterans are eligible for certain benefits.

Medical Care for Dependents and Survivors

The VA Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA) shares the cost of medical care for dependents and survivors of veterans. For more information, call our toll-free number, **1-800-733-8387**, or visit our website at www.va.gov/hac or write to the **VA Health Administration Center, PO Box 65023, Denver, CO 80206**.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payments may be available for surviving spouses who have not remarried, unmarried dependent children under age 18, helpless children, children between 18 and 23 if attending a VA-approved school, and low-income parents of deceased service members or veterans. To be eligible, the deceased must have died from: (1) a disease or injury incurred or aggravated while on active duty or active duty training; (2) an injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty while on inactive duty training; or (3) a disability compensable by VA. Death cannot be the result of willful misconduct. If a spouse remarries, eligibility for benefits may be restored if the marriage is terminated later by death or divorce.

DIC payments may also be authorized for survivors of veterans who were totally disabled by reason of service-connected disability(ies) at the time of death but whose deaths were not the result of their service-connected disability. The survivor qualifies if: (1) the veteran was continuously rated totally disabled for a period of 10 or more years immediately preceding death or (2) the veteran was so rated for a period of at least 5 years from the date of military discharge. The discharge must have been under conditions other than dishonorable.

DIC Payments to Surviving Spouse

Surviving spouses of veterans who die after January 1, 1993, receive a monthly payment. For a spouse entitled to DIC, based on the veteran's death prior to January 1, 1993, the amount paid may be based on the veteran's grade. An additional allowance may be granted to pay for their aid and attendance by another person.

DIC Payments to Parents and Children

The monthly payment for parents of deceased veterans depends upon the parents' income. Also, an additional allowance may be granted to pay for their aid and attendance by another person. There are additional DIC payments for dependent children. A child may be eligible if there is no surviving spouse, and the child is unmarried and under age 18, or if the child is between the age of 18 and 23 and attending school.

Spina Bifida Benefits

Spina bifida patients who are children of Vietnam veterans are eligible for vocational training, health care, and a monthly allowance. Contact a VA regional office to apply for medical treatment or benefits payments.

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Death Pension

Death pensions based on need are available for surviving spouses and unmarried children of deceased veterans with service during a period of war. Spouses must not have remarried and children must be under age 18, or under age 23 if attending a VA-approved school. Pension is not payable to those with estates large enough to provide maintenance. The veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and must have had 90 days or more of active military service, at least one day of which was during a period of war, or a service-connected disability justifying discharge for disability. Children who become incapable of self-support because of a disability before age 18 may be eligible for a pension as long as the condition exists, unless the child marries or the child's income exceeds the established limit. A surviving spouse may be entitled to higher income limitations or additional benefits if living in a nursing home, is in need of aid and attendance by another person, or is permanently housebound.

The Improved Pension program provides a monthly payment to bring an eligible person's income to a level established by law. The payment is reduced by the annual income from other sources such as Social Security paid to the surviving spouse or dependent children. Medical expenses may be deducted from the income ceiling. Pension is not payable to those who have assets that can be used to provide adequate maintenance.

Education Benefits

Education benefits are available to unremarried spouses and children of:

- Veterans who died or are permanently and totally disabled because of a disability arising from active military service.
- Veterans who died from any cause while rated permanently and totally disabled from service-connected disability.
- Service members listed for more than 90 days as currently missing in action or captured in line of duty by a hostile force.
- Service members listed for more than 90 days as currently detained or interned by a foreign government or power.

Benefits may be awarded for undergraduate or graduate training at a college or university, on-the-job training or apprenticeship, and various kinds of vocational/technical training. Spouses may take correspondence courses.

Home Loan Guaranties

A VA loan guaranty to acquire a home may be available to an unremarried spouse of a veteran or service member who died as a result of service-connected disabilities or to a spouse of a service member who has been officially listed as missing in action or as a prisoner of war for more than 90 days.

Montgomery GI Bill (Active Duty Death Benefit)

VA will pay a special Montgomery GI Bill death benefit to a designated survivor in the event of the service-connected death of a service member while on active duty or within one year after discharge or release. The deceased must either have been entitled to educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill program or a participant in the program who would have been so entitled but for a high school diploma or length of service requirement.

You may also qualify for work-study allowance. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.gibill.va.gov> or call 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551).